Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1648 - March 13 2009

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1648 with a release date of Friday, March 13, 2009 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. Hams in the United States mid-west face winter storms; Amateur radio stands down as bush fires subside down-under; the Global Simulated Emergency Test gets moved to April 18th, two on-orbit hamsats come back to life and the FCC busts a pirate radio station that was carrying ads for street gangs. Find out more on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1648 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESCUE RADIO: HAM RADIO MEETS THE MIDWEST STORMS

Hams in parts of the United States went on alert as severe weather pelted the central and mid-west states. Jack Parker, W8ISH, reports from Indianapolis:

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It wasn't the worst tornado outbreak on record, but one that kept Amateur Radio severe weather spotters and National Weather Service people busy. Conditions were ripe last Sunday as severe thunder storms swept across Illinois, Indiana and into Ohio. The National Weather Service confirmed Monday that damage in Illinois and Indiana on Sunday was the result of tornadoes.

The weather service said two tornadoes struck in central Illinois on Sunday. One damaged or destroyed about 30 structures near Champaign, Illinois, while another tornado destroyed a church and farm house near Greenfield. Three people suffered minor injuries and thousands of people lost power.

Weather service radar clocked one cell moving through Central Indiana at better than 80 miles per hour. They believe that cell produced a tornado that destroyed three trailers and damaged 20 others at a mobile home park just west of Ft. Wayne.

Amateur Radio operators feed reports of funnel clouds and wind damage as the swiftly moving storms ripped up homes and farms in southern Indiana. Winds were so powerful they leveled one home and left an empty school bus atop the flattened house in Lawrence County. At least 19 houses were damaged. There were no reports of severe injuries.

In northwest Ohio, high winds tore a roof off of one house, blew the windows out of another and damaged a barn near Defiance. Findlay, Ohio got the double whammy of high winds and torrential rains. The Blanchard River, which runs through downtown, flooded stores and closed dozens of roads. Conditions worsened later this week when a new wave of severe storms brought additional flooding to already stricken areas.

In Bay County, Mich., high wind drove ice over seawalls and into homes

along a stretch of Lake Huron beachfront. Authorities evacuated about 30 homes.

Reports of Amateur Radio operators helping with disaster relief following the storms are just now coming in. By the way, March 15 through 21 is severe weather preparedness week in Indiana. During this week people are encouraged to prepare for severe weather and have a plan of what to do if severe weather strikes.

Amateur Radio operators across Indiana have been attending Skywarn classes taught by the weather service officials. Those attending spotter sessions in the coming weeks will certainly have something to talk about.

Reporting from Indianapolis, this is Jack Parker, W8ISH.

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According to weather forecasters, more bad weather could be on its way. (W8ISH, ARNewsline(tm))

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RESCUE RADIO: HAM RADIO STANDS DOWN FROM VK BRUSH FIRES

Thanks to some needed rain, Australia's bush fires are coming under control and ham radio involvement is finally winding down. This, after more than a month of emergency communications provided by Australia's Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network and other ham radio groups. Mark Dods, VK3XMU, in Box Hill, wraps it all up:

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Audio report only. Please download the audio newscast at www.arnewsline.org

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The Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network better known as WICEN is the Australian equivalent of ARES and RACES here in the United States. Dods took a moment in his latest public report to congratulate the Australian ham community on a job well done:

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Audio report only. Please download the audio newscast at www.arnewsline.org

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Its been a hot summer in the Southern hemisphere and especially in Australia. As their fall season approaches the hams down-under hope that they will soon be off emergency stand-by alert. (WIA News)

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RESCUE RADIO: GLOBAL SET ON APRIL 18

Still with rescue radio news, word that the date for the 2009 Global

Simulated Emergency Test has been changed to coincide with World Amateur Radio Day which is slated for April 18th. The theme for the day will be "Amateur Radio: Your Resource in Disaster and Emergency Communication" with the event running from 1100 to 1500 hours UTC.

In a change for this and future events, the focus of this years Global Simulated Emergency Test will be on generating and relaying messages in a common format across country borders rather than the information gathering about capabilities which has taken place in the past. It also makes for ideal opportunity to showcase the work of ham radio emergency communications groups around the world.

The Global Simulated Emergency Test is sponsored by Region 1 of the International amateur Radio Union. More information will be posted on the IARU Region One website at www.iaru-r1.org as it becomes available. (GB2RS, IARU, Southgate)

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RESTRUCTURING: HAM RADIO IN PORTUGAL GETS A SPRING 2009 MAKEOVER

Major changes are coming to amateur radio in Portugal. According to an e-mail from CT1FBF, that nations new structure includes the introduction of a three class licensing system that will parallel the existing classes which have been grandfathered but which will no longer be issued.

In other changes, the minimum age to obtain a Portuguese ham ticket has been lowered to 12. All applicants regardless of age will be required to enter the hobby with a third class license and remain there for at least two years before upgrading. The new 3rd class license will be good for 5 years giving a ham three years in which to upgrade to 2nd class. If a 3rd class ham fails to upgrade he returns to what amounts to SWL status. That means he or she can only use their own station as a listening post and must go to a 2nd grade or higher licensee's station to transmit under the control of that ham.

As to the current and separate station license. That too will be discontinued and is being replaced by the new National Amateur Certificate. It allows a main fixed station, one additional fixed station, a mobile station and a portable station. This permit will have a 10 year life span and is renewable. The new rules also create community stations, club stations and provide for the issuance of special event call signs with a one year license term.

Portugal's new ham radio rules become effective on June 1st. More information in the Portuguese language is on-line at ct-spot dot blogspot dot com. (CT1FBF, CT-Spot News Team)

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BREAKING DX NEWS: MAYOTTE OPERATION HAMPERED BY A SLIM

Someone appears to have pirated a callsign during the recent operation from Mayotte by G3SWH and G3RWL. Both operators have now returned from the island only to find the DX Summit Database showing a number of contacts on

SSB listed to F H stroke G3RWL. Only one problem: Neither that callsign nor mode was used by the DXpedition pair.

The only call used from Mayotte by both operators was FH stroke G3SWH and none of their over 10,000 contacts was made using SSB voice. So if you contacted a station using the call G3RWL portable FH and claiming to be on Mayotte, you worked what the DX community calls a slim and no QSL card will be coming your way.

We will have more DX related news later on in this weeks report. (OPDX)

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BREAK 1

From Los Angeles, California in the United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the W9AA repeater serving Evergreen Park Illinois.

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: TEXAS HAMS RALLY AGAINST PROPOSED MOBILE PHONE LAW

Hams in Texas have been peppering their state legislators with e-mails. This, after learning about twin bills in the House and Senate that were both aimed at outlawing any sort of mobile radio operation that was not entirely hands free.

As we go to air it appears as if the campaign has been partially successful. They have apparently succeeded in getting an amendment attached to Senate measure SB582 that exempts federally licensed radio amateurs but at airtime are still trying to convince the author of the house version to accept an exclusion that would keep the bill from affecting amateur radio operations from a moving vehicle.

And this late word. Texas State Representative Jose Menendez's office says that it is considering offering an amendment to HB 220 to include similar language to that found in SB582.

As of now both bills are still in their respective legislative committee's. We are told that ARRL Legislative Action Assistant Glen Reid, K5FX, in Austin has been the ham radio point man in negotiations with senate and house leaders with the full backing of radio amateurs state wide. We will let you know how Texas ham radio community fares on this one in a future Amateur Radio Newsline report. (ARNewsline(tm) from various sources)

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ENFORCEMENT: FLORIDA BUSTS PIRATE ADVERTISING GANGS

Federal Communications Commission officials and deputies from the Orange County Florida Sheriff's gang unit have busted a pirate radio station. One they say was reportedly broadcasting information on where to buy drugs.

Authorities say the station calling itself "Street Heat" allegedly broadcast live advertisements for criminal gangs and discussions of where to buy drugs. Arrested in the March 6th raid were Balthazard Senat and Christopher Robert Roth. Both were charged with unauthorized transmission and possession of cannabis with intent to deliver.

The sheriff's office said a two-week investigation found Senat was operating a pirate radio station which broadcast on a frequency 91.3 Mhz. They say Roth was a disk jockey for the radio station and that the station was actually located in his bedroom.

A judge set Senat's bond at $1,250 and Roth's bond was set at $1,500. (Published reports)

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ENFORCEMENT: OVER POWER CONSUMER TRANSMITTER LEADS TO FCC CITATION

The distributor of the Whole House FM Transmitter is in trouble with the Commission for, among other things, marketing a device with too much RF power. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in the newsroom with more:

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Back on September 29, 2008, the Spectrum Enforcement Division of the Commission's Enforcement Bureau initiated an investigation into whether TAW Global, LLC, of Portage, Michigan had been marketing an unauthorized and non-compliant radio frequency device in the United States, called the Whole House FM Transmitter. In its response to a Letter of Inquiry the company responded that it began importing the Whole House FM Transmitter in May 2004. Also that it had imported a total of 18,371 units, and that it had distributed and sold in the United States a total of 11,689 units through its website.

TAW Global also stated that the Whole House FM Transmitter is manufactured by Richfield Electronics Limited based in China, and that it is certified. According to TAW, it exercised due diligence by receiving verbal assurances and documentation from Richfield verifying that the FM Transmitter does indeed meet FCC requirements and has a proper ID. TAW did however acknowledge that the Whole House FM Transmitter was not properly labeled with the FCC ID, as required by Section 2.925 of the Rules.

But the FCC looks at things differently. In its February 26th official citation to TAW Global the FCC says that the consumer transmitter does not meet its specifications. It says that tests conducted by its Office of Engineering and Technology shows that samples tested exceed the power levels authorized under its rules.

The FCC ends by telling TAW Global that if after it receives the letter of Citation it again violates the rules regarding such devices that it will be subject to a fine of up to $16,000 for each offense and each day the offense is permitted to continue.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF

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TAW Global, LLC was given 30 days from the date the Citation was issued to respond. (FCC, CGC)

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ENFORCEMENT: COLLEGE STATION FINED FOR INCOMPLETE PAPERWORK

The FCC this has fined Wayne State College station KWSC FM $7,200. This, in a case involving proper maintenance of the public file.

The small Nebraska station was issued notice of apparent liability for $9,000 in August 2005. In September it filed a response asking for a reduction based on the corrective measures it had taken. Specifically, KWSC had not placed quarterly issues and programs lists in its public inspection file for a period of about three years. When it managers realized its error they began including them. The station also notified the FCC noting that it had records of its programming, if not in the required form.

But the FCC rejected its arguments but noted the station's history of compliance and reduced the fine to $7,200. KWSC was given the customary 30 days to pay or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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ON THE NET: BE WARY OF 3rd PARTY APPLICATIONS ON FACEBOOK

Facebook users are being victimized by several variants of a rogue application. One that appears to have been designed to exploit public interest in the controversy surrounding the networks recent changes in its terms of service. Rebecca Bruce has more:

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According to the Internet security firm Trend Micro, the rogue program posts a notification messages to user profiles that falsely claims a friend had just reported the user for violating the site's terms of service. The messages advises recipients to click on a phony Facebook application link to find out why.

Now here's where it gets interesting. If someone fall for the bait and does go click, he or she is taken to a rogue application called "facebook closing down." Once installed, it spams the victim's friend list with the same warning message, and possibly harvests personal information in the process.

This is the second such attack in the past two weeks. Recently a rogue application called "The Error Check System" was detected and is suspected to also have been harvesting personal information from those duped into installing it.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Rebecca Bruce in Los Angeles.

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Facebook only began its application verification program last month. As such it is urging its users to exercise more control over the third-party Facebook applications that they accept. (InfoOnLine, others)

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DIGITAL TV CHANGEOVER NEWS: LITTLE PROBLEM ON FEBRUARY 17

Now that the digital transition has begun in earnest, early reports suggest only a relatively modest level of disruption for television viewers. The National Association of Broadcasters said stations that made the change on February 17th averaged only 50 to 200 calls from viewers while the Federal Communications Commission has received a total of about 28,000 calls.

The NAB said 421 stations made the shift on February 17th joining 220 local affiliates that had already changed to digital in advance of the new June 12 deadline. The NAB says that most of the calls were questions about connecting converter boxes and rescanning them. (RW)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: WHITE SPACE DEVICE TESTING COMES TO CALIFORNIA

The FCC has granted a new experimental permit to operate in the 174 to 216, 470 to 608 and 614 to 698 MHz bands has been granted to Adaptrum, Inc. This, for the testing of so-called white space devices within State of California. Translated, this means testing on TV Channels 7 through 51 with the exception of Channel 37 which is reserved for Radio Astronomy.

White spaces refer to frequencies allocated to a broadcasting service but not used locally. In the United States, the term has gained prominence after the FCC ruled that unlicensed devices that can guarantee that they will not interfere with assigned broadcasts can use the empty white spaces in spectrum. The call sign issued to Adaptrum experiment with white space devices is WE2XXI. More is on-line at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-288835A1.doc (CGC)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: UK STUDENT DEVELOPS PARTICLE DETECTOR

A 17-year-old student, Peter Hadfield, , has won the first ever United Kingdom's National Young Scientist of the Year award. This, for developing a hand-held particle detector called Lucid. Lucid will be sent into space on a Surrey Satellite Technology SSTL satellite and used for research in 2010. (Southgate)

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RADIO EDUCATION: RCA DONATES STATION TO FLORIDA CLUB

The Education Committee of the Radio Club of America says that it has received its first donation of a complete amateur radio station that will be given to the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Club in Orlando, Florida. The Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Club has a specially equipped trailer that it

takes to schools to demonstrate amateur radio communications. It also goes into schools and children's hospitals to demonstrate how to make contact with the International Space Station via ham radio. The club says it's extremely grateful to The Radio Club of America for the donation of the much-needed equipment. (RCA, WB2MGP)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: HONORING OUR TROOPS WITH ARMAD DAY 2009

Amateur Radio military Appreciation Day or ARMAD will be held this year on May 23rd. Planners hope to encourage all radio clubs and their operators to get on the air and show thanks, support, and appreciation to our troops, military retired, and veterans. More is on-line at www.armad.net (ARMAD)

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SOCIAL SCENE: IDAHO IN APRIL

Turning to the ham radio social scene, word that retired FCC Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, will be the banquet speaker at the first ever Idaho Section Hamfest. The event takes place the weekend of April 24th through the 26th at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Boise. The event is sponsored by the Voice of Idaho Amateur Radio Club. More is on-line at www dot voiceofidaho dot org. (Via e-mail)

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THE SOCIAL SCENE: WELLINGTON RADIO EXPO '09

And if you plan to be in New Zealand before months end, you might want to add the Wellington Region EXPO '09 to your travel plans. The date for this event is Saturday March 28th at the Knox Church Hall in Lower Hutt. Doors open to the public at 10 am local time and the entry feel is only entry $4.00 New Zealand. More information is on-line at http://www.nzart.org.nz/events/index.html (NZART)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: AO-27 BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE AS FM REPEATER IN SPACE

Some good news from up in space. This with word that the Amsat Oscar 27 satellite has been brought back to life. Bruce Tennany, K6PZW, reports:

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The Amsat Oscar 27 satellite failed back in December, 2008 and went off the air. The control team pursued what it termed as a strategy to drain the batteries in the hopes of resetting the locked up modem.

The idea worked and during February the control team managed to upload the high level control software needed to bring AO-27 back on-line. They then took a week to collect data to check on the battery status and conduct an on-orbit checkout before making ready to return the satellite to operation to its analog mode.

As of March 1st the AO-27 control team reports that telemetry is looking good. During several passes over the US they turned on the analog voice repeater with a target for full operation on or about March 7th. You will easily know if its there as it will be in its FM repeater mode with an uplink at 145.850 MHz and a downlink 436.795 MHz.

Give it a try.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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More is on line at www dot ao27 dot org. (ANS)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: AO-7 SPRINGS BACK TO LIFE

Still with amazing news from space, an aging ham radio satellite has sprung back to life. This with words that the Amsat Oscar 7 UHF Beacon at 435.100 MHz has been reported as becoming operational.

The satellites 70 centimeter beacon was monitored with very strong signals during February 28th passes and also since then with satellite telemetry in RTTY format is being copied. Some listeners reported that the beacon initially sounded as if it was in a two-state mode that sounded a bit like RTTY in idle. Successful RTTY decodes have since been accomplished.

AO-7 is one of the oldest ham radio birds still on-orbit. It was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on board a Delta 2310 rocket way back on November 15, 1974. (ANS, N1JEZ)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SA HAMSAT ON LAUNCH HOLD AGAIN

The launch of the South Africa's SumbandilaSat ham radio satellite has been delayed again. This time due to a technical problem at the Russian Baikonur Cosmodrome launch site.

The Director-General of the South African Department of Science and Technology is Dr. Phil Mjwara. He told S A AMSAT that the launch agency in Russia had sent a message that the launch would probably be at some time in May this year.

Dr. Mjwara said that as the Russian launch agency had not been specific in its communication. Therefore he will not make a public announcement until the Department of Science and Technology had received full details about the reasons for the delay and a new confirmed date.

It is speculated that the wait is being caused by problems with the on time delivery of one of the other payloads. Meantime, South Africa Amsat's SumbandilaSat is still safely stored at the satellite test range. (SA AMSAT)

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RADIO IN SPACE: KEPLER MISSION BLASTS OFF

NASA's Kepler mission to search out habitable planets the far reaches of the universe successfully launched from Cape Canaveral on Friday, March 6th. Kepler is designed to find the first Earth-size planets orbiting stars at distances where water could pool on the planet's surface. Liquid water is believed to be essential for the formation of life.

Kepler is a NASA Discovery mission. By radioing its findings back to Earth, Kepler will give scientists their first look at the frequency of Earth size planets in our galaxy as well as the frequency of these planets that could theoretically be habitable.

More information about the mission is on-line at www.nasa.gov/kepler . (NASA)

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RADIO IN SPACE: SATELLITE COLLISION POSES FUTURE ON-ORBIT PROBLEMS

Debris from a recent satellite collision between an out of control Russian military satellite a working U.S. Iridium commercial bird and could circle Earth for up to 10,000 years. This, according to Russia's Mission Control chief who admits that the debris field could threaten the safety of many other satellites in an already crowded low Earth orbit area of space.

Vladimir Solovyov is the Mission chief. He says that the smashup occurred some 800 kilometer above Earth. He notes that this is the busiest part of near-Earth space and is a very popular orbit which is used by Earth tracking and communications satellites.

Solovyov says that the clouds of debris pose a serious danger to all of them and especially those made of light weight alloys because debris fragments travel a very high speed and can damage a spacecraft. (Space.com)

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WORLDBEAT: LACK OF FUNDS CAUSES UK REPEATER TO GO QRT

Time has taken its toll on a popular United Kingdom repeater and now there is no money to bring it up to the standards needed for it to continue in service. Because of this, the GB3WA, 70 centimeter repeater located near the village of Kilmington in South Wiltshire, has been permanently taken out of service.

For it to have been saved from extinction the repeater needed several of its 30 year old cavities replaced and a new power amplifier to bring it up to full output. The site needs a new tower to support both the repeaters antennas replacing the temporary mast that's now in use.

Unfortunately, the funds are just not available and so the sponsoring groups has made the decision to remove the repeater from the air. You can read more at the URL in this weeks printed Newsline report.

(DO NOT READ http://twxrg.web.googlepages.com/home) (GB2RS)

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DX

In D-X, W5JON advises a correction in his operation from St. Lucia. John tells Newsline that he will be active stroke as J6 from Marigot Bay from March 24th to April 2nd with activity on 160 through 6 meters. He will also be on for the CQ WPX SSB Contest on March 28th and 29th. QSL via W5JON

DL3OCH reports that his trip to Nigeria will be slightly delayed. Listen out for him to start his activity later than the March 5th date that he had previously announced. He has also reported that he has received his Nigerian license and will use the callsign 5N0EME. QSL via DL3OCH.

IK4ALM, will be operating portable 6W from Senegal between March 29th and April 9th. Activity will be on 40 through 10 meters using CW and SSB with 100 watts into a ground plane. QSL via IK4ALM.

ON4AEO, will lead a team of operators on a DXpedition to Mozambique from April 9th to the 13th. The call sign will be C-91-F-C and They hope to activate 80 through 10 meters using CW, SSB, RTTY and PSK. The QSL Manager is ON4CJK.

DL3KWF and DL3KWR are reported active from Madiera Island signing portable C-T-3 from the Hotel Royal Orchid. They should be there through March 19th operating primarily C-W on 30, 17 and 12 meters. There may be some RTTY and PSK-31 as well. QSL via their home call signs.

Lastly, listen out for LA3JJ portable EA8 from Isla de Fuerteventura in the Canary Island. He will be at that location through March 26th operating 30 and 17 meters using C-W only. QSL this operation to LA3KK direct or by the Bureau.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: PAVING THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

And finally this week, discarded electronic hardware, including bits and pieces that built the information superhighway, can be recycled into an additive that makes super-strong asphalt paving material for real highways. Amateur Radio Newsline's Randy Ross, KI4ZJI, has the details:

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Researchers in China think that they have the answer as to what to do with old computers, cellphones, and even old ram radio gear. They say to use them to literally pave highways and by-ways around the world.

A study by a research team headed by Professor Zhenming Xu describes the development of a new recycling process that can convert discarded electronic circuit boards into an asphalt modifier. The material makes high-performance paving material asphalt that is cheaper, longer lasting, and more environmentally friendly than conventional asphalt, the scientists report.

The researchers note that millions of tons of electronic waste pile up each year. The printed circuit boards used in personal computers, cell phones, and other electronic gear contain toxic metals such as lead and mercury. This in turn poses a difficult problem in disposing of them in an environmentally friendly and safe manner.

But the research group found that the boards, which provide mechanical support and connections for the electronic components,contain glass fibers and plastic resins. They reasoned that these could be re-used to strengthen asphalt paving.

Now, the scientists are describing a new recycling method that quickly separates the toxic metals from circuit boards, yielding a fine, metal-free powder. In laboratory tests, hen mixed into asphalt the powder produced a stronger paving material less apt to soften at high temperatures.

When this research might lead to actual real world trials of the recycled P-C boards as highway pavement material is unknown.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm, Randy Ross, KI4ZJI, in Shelby, North Carolina.

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Who knows. One of these days you may be operating mobile on some newly paved highway, hit a bump and think to yourself: "Hmmm. Was that my old Pentium computer or my 2 meter H-T?" (ScienceDaily)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the nominating period for the 2009 Amateur Radio Newsline

Young Ham of the Year Award is now open. Complete details are on our website at www.arnewsline.org Just scroll down to the words "2009 YHOTY Nominations Now Open" and click for more information and an official nominating form.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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